

Evaluating Processes in Public Crime Labs

“Research and Evaluation for the Testing and Interpretation of Physical Evidence in Publicly Funded Forensic Laboratories”

March 8, 2016

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Solicitation Post Date: 1/7/2016

Solicitation Close Date: 4/6/2016



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Webinar Overview

- Background and goals of the solicitation
- Recommendations
- Application expectations and requirements
- Review process
- Application checklist

Background and Purpose

- This solicitation is intended to improve the testing and processing of physical evidence.
 - Research the process, not necessarily the underlying science of the testing.
- This is the second year of this solicitation.
 - There have been several significant revisions since last year.

Goals of the Solicitation

- Assessing Existing Laboratory Protocols
 - Improve understanding of the scientific rationale underpinning existing laboratory processes.
- Evaluating Emerging Methods
 - Assess the value of emerging laboratory processes.

Challenges to R and D in the public lab

- The primary mission of publicly funded forensic laboratories is processing case work.
- We are aware that few such labs have dedicated research divisions.
- In addition, to avoid supplanting, existing lab personnel generally must perform research work in overtime.
- BUT forensic lab practitioners are in the best position to know the problems facing them in their processes.

Recommendations

- One significant change to this year's solicitation is the strong recommendation to hire a dedicated researcher.
 - A postdoctoral fellow is recommended, but any scientist with a strong research background, who does not have a casework requirement, would be appropriate.
 - This also provides one avenue to the NCFS recommendation that postdoctoral projects be funded to facilitate translation of research into forensic science practice.

Recommendations (cont.)

- In order to provide strong translatable research, every effort should be made to validate the research by using actual casework samples.
- If this is not possible, proposals should include a detailed description of how realistic samples will be generated.

A note on what will not be funded

- “Proposals primarily to purchase equipment, materials, software, or supplies, or to contract or purchase training, validation, or other services that will complete the majority of the proposed research project.”
 - However: “A budget may include these items if they are necessary to conduct research, development, demonstration, evaluation, or analysis.”

Expected deliverables

- NIJ expects that scholarly products will result from awards under this solicitation.
 - Peer-reviewed journal articles
 - Presentations at appropriate scientific conferences
- The strength of this research lies in disseminating the results to the forensic science community at large.

Requirements

- SF-424
- Project abstract (250-400 words)
- Program narrative (**14-page limit, at least 7 pages devoted to program design**)
- Budget detail worksheet and budget narrative
- Proof of Forensic Laboratory Accreditation
- Applicant disclosure of pending applications
- Research and evaluation independence and integrity
- Human subjects and Privacy Certificate (required for ALL research applications)
- Other Attachments as applicable
 - Indirect cost rate agreement
 - Applicant disclosure of high-risk status

External and Internal Review

- Scan for Basic Minimum Requirements
 - Program narrative
 - Budget detail worksheet
 - Budget narrative
 - CVs of key personnel
 - Forensic Lab Accreditation
- External review by appropriate peer reviewers
 - Three reviewers per application- both practitioners and researchers
- Internal review by NIJ scientific staff and leadership
- All funding decisions are at the discretion of the NIJ Director

Selection Criteria

- Statement of the Problem (10%)
- Project Design and Implementation (50%)
- Potential Impact (20%)
- Capabilities/Competencies (20%)
- Budget
- Plan for Dissemination to Broader Audiences

Application Checklist – See pages 29- 30 of the solicitation

Application Checklist

Research and Evaluation for the Testing and Interpretation of Physical Evidence in Publicly Funded Forensic Laboratories

This application checklist has been created to assist in developing an application.

What an Applicant Should Do:

Prior to Registering in Grants.gov:

- ☐ Acquire a DUNS Number (see page 21)
- ☐ Acquire or renew registration with SAM (see page 21)

To Register with Grants.gov:

- ☐ Acquire AOR and Grants.gov username/password (see page 22)
- ☐ Acquire AOR confirmation from the E-Biz POC (see page 22)

To Find Funding Opportunity:

- ☐ Search for the funding opportunity on Grants.gov
- ☐ Download Funding Opportunity and Application Package
- ☐ Sign up for Grants.gov [email](#) notifications (optional) (see page 21)
- ☐ Read [Important Notice: Applying for Grants in Grants.gov](#)
- ☐ Read OJP policy and guidance on "conference" approval, planning, and reporting available at ojp.gov/financialguide/DOJ/PostawardRequirements/chapter3.10a.htm (see page 10)

After Application Submission, Receive Grants.gov Email Notifications That:

- ☐ (1) Application has been received
- ☐ (2) Application has either been successfully validated or rejected with errors (see page 23)

If no Grants.gov receipt, and validation or error notifications are received:

- ☐ Please refer to the section: Experiencing Unforeseen Grants.gov Technical Issues (see page 22)

General Requirements:

- ☐ Review the [Solicitation Requirements](#) in the OJP Funding Resource Center.

What an Application Should Include:

- ☐ Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424) (see page 11)
- ☐ Project Abstract (see page 11)
- ☐ Program Narrative (see page 11)
- ☐ Appendices (see page 14)
 - ☐ Bibliography/references
 - ☐ Any tools/instruments, questionnaires, tables/charts/graphs, or maps pertaining to the proposed study that supplement those in the narrative
 - ☐ Curriculum vitae or resumes of the principal investigator and any and all co-principal investigators
 - ☐ List (to the extent known) of all proposed project staff members
 - ☐ Proposed project timeline and expected milestones
 - ☐ Human Subjects Protection Paperwork
 - ☐ Privacy Certificate

Q&A



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Contact Information

National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS)

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